



Arlington Youth Health and Safety Coalition (AYHSC)

Minutes – February 13, 2013

5:30-7:00pm

Whittemore Robbins House

- I. Welcome:** Ned Walsh, Mary DeCoursey, Kathy Hirsch, Judith Carroll, Christine Connolly, Colleen Leger. Karen Dillon, Cindy Bouvier, Lynn Horgan
- II. One on One Reflections:** Colleen summarized the purpose of ‘one on one’ conversations as an outreach effort to gain insight into individual (and shared) perspectives on youth health and safety in Arlington. Last month, Colleen challenged members to conduct at least one informal conversation with a community member. Coalition members took turns sharing their conversations and experiences with this outreach effort:
 - Religious-St. Eulalia :* Kathy attended a recent parent/youth CCD discussion group on risk/protective factors and substance use prevention. This forum provided an opportunity for participants to learn about teenage concerns and problem solving approaches to support/help teens using substances. At the end of the discussion, Kathy provided information about the Coalition and its role in, and contributions to the community.
 - Community Member-* One adult in the community who expressed the opinion, “kids will be kids”, stated he would not intervene if he saw kids using. Discussion ensued around lack of supervision, safety risks, underage public drinking and cultural attitudes such as rite of passage and learned behaviors. Colleen stressed the importance of changing the culture, reducing tolerance, increasing education and promoting enforcement/consequences.
 - Special Needs Population-* Colleen highlighted her conversation with parent advocate, Jerri Newman on issues related to High School youth with special needs. Colleen provided Coalition history and discussed topics ranging from underage drinking at dances, to at risk youth and efforts to change the landscape.
 - Community Member-* Expressed concerns related to underage drinking hotspots, litter, traffic, noise and fears related to public underage drinking. Group members discussed collaborating with Lexington PD, friends of parks associations, and neighborhood groups to address the perceived increase in underage drinking at “llamas’.” Ned offered to initiate outreach to the Lexington APD.
- III. Parent Survey:** Colleen emailed the Parent Survey (via Survey Monkey) to AHS and Ottoson parents with help from Cindy B., Mary Villano (AHS) and Maureen Murphy (Ottoson). At this point, over 400 parents have responded to the survey. The survey assesses parental attitudes and perceptions around youth substance use. Colleen shared some preliminary findings, and discussed opportunities for further data analysis and cross-sectional examination. Useful feedback was obtained in all areas of the survey, shedding light on areas worthy of a social norms campaign targeting parent behaviors and attitudes, and community education on topics such as consequences of use and social host laws. Coalition members provided individual perspectives on the survey results so far, and Cindy B. suggested the final results be shared with the community. Next Steps: send out an email reminder for parents to complete the survey after February vacation. STAT opportunity: Mary, Judith, Karen and Lynn volunteered to work with Colleen on the survey results to break down the categories, themes, problems and action steps the Coalition will take. Suggestions mentioned: A social norms campaign and continued parent education efforts (such as the Navigating the Teen Years model).
- IV. DFC GRANT APPLICATION:** Group Brainstorm

- Discussion on local risk factors, selecting data to highlight problems/consequences- Colleen invited input on how we might highlight our successes and demonstrate continued need in Arlington. Quantitative and qualitative data are available to support obvious areas of challenge and success. Members provided the following feedback:
 - Highlight decreases in perception of harm re: marijuana use
 - Cindy B. expressed confidence in the Coalition's efforts over the past five years and suggested the application emphasize that we are on the right path, making progress and emphasize the challenges ahead. For example: Social Norms Campaigns are working, but we are looking to expand these to target parents as well. It is a progressive measure that takes time to see change.
 - Highlight data around marijuana use and changes with decriminalization and medical marijuana law
 - Emphasize how Arlington has issued more liquor licenses
 - Address stress and its correlation with youth substance use- Provide current data showing increases in academic stress levels. Obtain additional data from local sources, such as Arlington Youth Counseling Center (AYCC). Kathy offered to provide referral data on the "student support team" for at risk youth.
 - Demonstrate how a town such as Arlington, with a strong infrastructure, would be a worthwhile investment.
 - Obtain pertinent data from Arlington Police Department related to protective custody, domestic/family violence
- Engagement of underrepresented sectors (youth, faith, business, medical) – Identify and engage more youth from the community. Karen offered to reach out to potential youth to encourage their participation in Coalition initiatives. Colleen expressed the need to continue reaching out to elements of the faith community who may not be aware of, or engaged in the Coalition. Mary offered to set up a meeting with Jared at St. Eulalia's to initiate outreach.
- STAT members needed throughout grant application process. This will involve 1-2 meetings to work on this.

V. Other Updates

- Members collectively raved about the recent Ottoson and High School assembly presentation by Chris Herren. Kathy mentioned that the presentation had a significant impact on AHS students. Following the assembly, support staff provided an opportunity to process with the students about some of the issues raised during the presentation. One aspect of the presentation that was highlighted was how individuals can minimize the impact of initial experimentation ("only a line") and the lifelong impact of choices and actions. At the middle school level, the impact was great as well. Support staff engaged students in a variety of reflection exercises and conversations, and promoted awareness of available support services. Both schools have designated Friday, 2/15/13 as Project Purple Day.
- Colleen enthusiastically acknowledged and welcomed Coalition members, Karen Dillon and Cindy Stark as the new AYHSC Co-chairs. Both Karen and Cindy are eager to serve in these roles, and to provide leadership and guidance to the Coalition over the next year. Each has identified specific interests about which she is passionate and eager to pursue.

VI. Upcoming Trainings and Events

Feb. 14 & Feb 27, 2013	Medical Marijuana Listening Sessions	Boston – Roxbury Comm. College 10:00am-1:00pm; Holyoke Comm. College 1:30pm-4:30pm	Special listening session for development of medical marijuana regulations. Interested parties have up to three minutes to comment. Written comments also accepted by MDPH through 2/28/13. http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/quality/drugcontrol/medical-marijuana-listening-sessions.pdf
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Mar. 5, 2013	Parent Forum: The Connected Child!	OMS- 7:00-8:30pm	Speaker Jon Mattleman- Learning about how children use technology & the real dangers of being so connected.
Mar. 7, 2013	Meeting with Leaders of Youth Sports Organizations	Arlington Senior Center; 7:00pm	Meeting organized by Joe Connelly & Arlington Recreation. AYHSC will address youth substance use & local risk factors.
May 2, 2013	Secure XV- Understanding and Preventing Adolescent Substance Abuse	Westford 8:30am-2:00pm	Training- http://middlesexpartnershipsfor youth.com/events/story.php?event=42

VII. Meeting Adjournment

- Next Coalition Meeting- March 21st, 2013